



# Mount Rainier National Park

## Sister Mountain Project

### John Muir's Ascent of Mt. Rainier 1888

<b>Overview</b>	This activity presents students with a literary analysis task, based upon their reading of an extract from naturalist John Muir's writing. Students will read Muir's account of his climb up Mt. Rainier and answer the accompanying questions.
<b>Grade Level</b>	8-12
<b>Objectives</b>	After completing this activity students will be able to understand and appreciate the challenges faced by early climbers of Mt. Rainier. Students will also be able to define key words and identify key places on the map of Mt. Rainier and its surrounding region.
<b>Timeframe</b>	1-2 periods.
<b>Vocabulary</b>	crevasse (s), precipitous, cumbersome, lateral, moraine, luxuriant, gauzy, withal, pluckily, caulks, ere, array, dominion, sublimity, hardtack, alpenstock
<b>Standards</b>	<p>Washington State G.L.E.s:</p> <p>The Student understands and uses different skills and strategies to read:</p> <p>1.3: Builds vocabulary through wide reading.</p> <p>The student understands the meaning of what is read.</p> <p>1.1 Demonstrate evidence of reading comprehension</p> <p>1.2 Expand comprehension by analyzing, interpreting, and synthesizing information and ideas in literary and informational text.</p> <p>The student reads different materials for a variety of purposes</p> <p>3.4 Read for literary experience in a variety of genres.</p>
<b>Background</b>	Mt. Fuji had already been climbed thousands of times and its story well known when the first recorded climb of Mt. Rainier was logged by P.B. Van Trump in 1870. The great naturalist and environmentalist John Muir made one of the first ascents of Mt. Rainier in 1888. This is his account of the difficult climb.
<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Directions for students:</b> The teacher may wish to prepare students for the reading assignment by having them first find out the meanings of the

	<p>unfamiliar words used by Muir. Another strategy would be to use paired/shared reading and have pairs use their dictionaries as they go along, identifying each of the words below. Whatever direction you choose, the vocabulary activity is critical in making sense of this reading material.</p>
<p><b>Suggested Assessment</b></p>	<p>After reading Muir's account, answer the following questions in complete sentences, using the terms of the questions to help you compose your answers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What challenges did Mt. Rainier present to a climber according to Muir?</li> <li>• By what means of transport did Muir and his group reach Mt. Rainier?</li> <li>• With the aid of a modern day map, trace Muir's route to the mountain from Seattle. Trace or draw a sketch map showing the locations he passed through on his way to Rainier.</li> <li>• What were the dangers faced crossing the Nisqually River?</li> <li>• In paragraph four, Muir describes the landscape in two ways. What are the two descriptions and why are these perhaps surprising words to use ?</li> <li>• Why was "Cloud Camp" a turning point for the expedition?</li> <li>• List at least five hardships that Muir's group endured during their night on the mountain.</li> <li>• Speculate why Muir's group arose at 4 a.m. to begin their final ascent.</li> <li>• What equipment did the climbers use for the last, most difficult part of their climb?</li> <li>• Identify two things that Muir found at the summit of Rainier.</li> <li>• Re-read the final two paragraphs. If you were John Muir, how would you have rated the success of your expedition? Why would you have felt that way?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Extensions</b></p>	<p>The history of mountaineering has produced a rich literary tradition. Some students may wish to read more about mountaineering. These encounters of the modern era make interesting comparisons to climbing in Muir's time. Here is a short selection:</p> <p>Barcott, Bruce. <i>The Measure of a Mountain, Beauty and Terror on Mount Rainier</i>, Sasquatch Books, Seattle, 1997. In a series of essays, the author presents himself as a clumsy beginner. some funny, some poignant stories on the challenge of climbing Mt. Rainier.</p> <p>Molenaar, Dee, <i>The Challenge of Rainier</i>. The definitive work on the history of mountaineering on Mt. Rainier.</p> <p>Krakauer, Jon, <i>Into Thin Air</i>. The dramatic story of the disastrous 1996</p>

	<p>climbing season on Mt. Everest.</p> <p>Breshears, David, <i>High Exposure</i>. Written by the man who made the Imax film Everest, this is a series of triumphs and tragedies in a climbing career.</p> <p>Boukreev, Anatoli &amp; Weston De Walt, G. <i>The Climb</i>. St. Martin's Griffin, New York , 1997. This is a reply to Krakauer's account of what happened on Everest in 1996.</p> <p>Willis, Clint. (ed) <i>High, Stories of Survival From Everest and K2</i>, Thunder Mouth Press, New York, 1999. A great selection of classic stories from the world's two highest peaks.</p>
<b>References/ Resources</b>	<p>Kirk, Ruth, <b>Sunrise to Paradise: The Story of Mt. Rainier National Park</b>, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1999.</p> <p>Molenaar, Dee, <b>The Challenge of Rainier</b>, The Mountaineers, Seattle 1987.</p>